



MINUTES
Elected Officers Compensation Commission
Monday, February 23, 2015 @ 3:00 p.m.
City Hall, City Council Conference Room, 10th Floor

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting called to order at 3:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Cassie Alley, Member
Catherine Groll, Member-excused
Samantha Harkins, Member
Brian Huggler, Member
Liisa Speaker, Member
Edwina Marshall, Member -excused
Kurt Berryman, Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Don Kulhanek, Assistant City Attorney
Chris Swope, City Clerk
Council Member Wood
Council Member Houghton

EXCUSED ABSENCE

MOTION BY HARKINS, SUPPORTED BY SPEAKER TO EXCUSE COMMISSION MEMBER MARSHALL AND COMMISSION MEMBER GROLL. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION BY COMMISSION MEMBER ALLEY, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSION MEMBER BERRYMAN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY COMMISSION MEMBER HARKINS, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSION MEMBER ALLEY TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

COMMUNICATIONS

Submitted for the record was a letter from Mayor Bernero who was not able to attend, and an email correspondence from Finance Director Angie Bennett in response to the questions from the February 18, 2015 meeting...

BUSINESS

Elected Officials

City Clerk Swope

Mr. Swope outlined his department and job duties, including voter registration, elections, and supervisory roll of 400+ employees during an election, and the plans for three (3) elections in 2015 and 2016. Mr. Swope also oversees the maintenance of all the City records, prepares council meeting agendas, handles business licenses, passports, and has a role on the Tri County on Aging Board as a City Representative. With a recent hiring of a Deputy Clerk, the salary range is in the proximity of Mr. Swope's salary as the City Clerk.

Commission Member Speaker asked if Mr. Swope agreed his last raise was in 2009, and Mr. Swope agreed. Commission Member Speaker asked for details on Clerk office hours, and working hours. Mr. Swope stated the office is open 8-5 Monday – Friday, however his role as Clerk also requires attendance at night Council meetings, staffing the Board of Ethics, elections training sessions after hours for his employees, Saturday hours, particularly during elections, and on election days hours could range from 5 a.m. to 2 a.m. depending on the election.

Commission Member Berryman asked about his benefits which might include a city car, or travel expenses for all the meetings. Mr. Swope stated he does not use a City car, but his personal car for convenience and does not submit for reimbursement, and there are no outside reimbursements.

Commission Member Alley asked if Mr. Swope agreed that his increase in the last 10 years was 2%, and it was agreed upon.

Mayor Bernero

The letter from Mayor Bernero was placed on the record, and it was noted his recommendation of the Commission review what could have been an adjustment for inflation between 2002-2014 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Annual CPI), which would have the position of Mayor at \$140,805, Clerk at \$90,931 and members of Council at \$26,582.

Mr. Kulhanek presented the Commission with an updated spreadsheet from the Human Resources Department for comparisons from the last meeting. Commission members reviewed the comparisons, and population, with similarities to Flint and Ann Arbor in both areas.

Commission Member Huggler asked for a consensus from the Commission that they agreed that it appeared the Mayor and Clerk were underpaid compared to the other comparisons. The Commission agreed.

It was stated that the last time Council denied an Elected Officers Compensation Commission recommendation was in 2002 and 2003, and Mr. Kulhanek confirmed. Council Staff read the recommendation from 2003 that was denied.

The Commission discussed the option of recommending an increase in a two year process. The Commission held further discussions on the increases since 2001, a benchmark, and the effects of the falling economy, and now a better economy. Commission Member Alley asked Council staff to contact HR about information on whom the highest paid employees are currently for a comparison of how much more they make than the Mayor. Council Staff emailed the Finance Director and the HR Director.

Commission Member Alley cited her calculations that it appeared the Mayor would need a 22% increase to be in line with the Mayor of Ann Arbor, and the Clerk would need a 20% increase, Commission Member Huggler added that the Commission could consider a two year span on the increase.

Council Member Speaker referenced the insurance savings from the last meeting for the Commission to consider on what the City has saved since Council dropped their benefits.

Council Members

Council Member Carol Wood

Council Member acknowledged the Commission for their invitation, and stated she was not in attendance to advocate for an increase, but to at least stay where the rates currently are. Council Member Wood informed the Commission on the hours that Council Members spend at Committee meetings, and neighborhood meeting in addition to the Council meetings. Council Member Wood asked the Commission to consider, when reviewing the comparisons, to balance with what the Lansing community expects.

Commission Member Alley asked Council Member Wood if she believed that Council had not had raises in 14 years, and Council Member Wood confirmed, and added that they also lost their benefits. Council also gave back a portion of their salary when the employees were given furlough days. Mr. Kulhanek confirmed that the furlough days for the employees ended in 2013.

Commission Member Huggler asked Council Member Wood if she could speak to the statement that if Council as a whole felt they are under paid. Council Member Wood replied by stating that it might not be completely understood what is expected of Council until you are on Council. Council Member Wood added that she has never discussed it with any Council Members and none have requested to come to the EOCC for a raise. Commission Member Huggler asked why some recommendations from the Commission in the past have been denied by Council. Council Member Wood answered that Council would look at the constraints in the budget, and the economy at the time. Currently with the election coming up, and some residents hear that a Council position is a second job there is a public concern if they get an increase. If the Commission does a comparison in their recommendation to other communities, it might not be as sensitive. Commission Member Huggler added to the discussion that it appears that for 14 years the raises have not kept up with the cost of living. Council Member Wood concluded by stating that the Lansing City Council is extremely integrated into the neighborhoods, more than other communities, and that she believes Council extents itself.

Council Member Wood left the meeting, and the Commission continued discussions on the comparisons and the cost of living. Mr. Kulhanek confirmed there were still no comparisons submitted from Dearborn.

Reports, Presentations, Commission Questions and Discussion

No reports to discuss.

Old Business

No old business to discuss.

New Business

No new business to discuss.

Commission Member Comments

No comments

ITEMS UNDER SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

No discussion

OTHER

No discussion

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments

The Commission held discussions on obtaining a consensus on the percentage of an increase they would be interested in recommending for Mayor, Clerk and Council. Commission Member Huggler referenced the Ann Arbor range for a comparison for the Clerk, Dearborn range for a comparison for the Mayor, and a raise for Council, but undecided on the comparison. Commission Member Speaker suggested discussions on a two year cycle if there is a raise, and asked for discussion from the Commission on if the percentage increase should be the same for Mayor, Clerk and Council. Commission Member Berryman read from a media article that the Dearborn clerk in 2013 made \$72,500. Commission Member Huggler stated that comparisons show everyone gets 20% increase split over two years. Commission Member Alley stated that the 20% for Council would only equate to and additional \$2,000 over the two years. Commission Member Harkins commented the recommendation would justify it, and with employee raises after sacrifices, the elected officials have made the same sacrifices but have not received the raises.

Commission Member Speaker asked what the job responsibilities of the Council President and Vice President are in comparison to the rest of Council. Council Member Houghton arrived and answered the question, including details on leadership having overview responsibilities of the Council, along with President and Vice President having more demand on call responsibilities.

Commission Member Huggler asked Council Member Houghton if she had any input for the Commission on compensation. Council Member Houghton acknowledged the Commission for all they have done, and believed that whatever is decided will be the best for the City. Council Member Houghton added that it is understood the position of Council is a part time job, and hasn't seen an increase in years. Commission Member Huggler asked if a raise was recommended, how she would play that, because some Council might not want one, even though the EOCC recommends. Council Member Houghton responded that it would depends on how the EOCC writes the recommendation, and suggested the Commission document the numbers, an even increase, and similar increase to Clerk and Mayor.

Council Member Houghton left the meeting.

Commission Member Berryman asked Mr. Kulhanek if Council could purchase insurance if it is not offered as a benefit. Mr. Kulhanek confirmed they could purchase at their own cost.

Commission Member Speaker and Commission Member Alley asked who would be drafting the recommendation letter and if items could be added. Mr. Kulhanek stated he would work with Council Staff and the Commission can add details. Commission Member Alley offered to draft details for the letter for justification, forward to Commission Member Huggler for proof, and then onto the rest of the Commission for input. It was agreed that the recommendation letter and details would be drafted prior to the March 5th scheduled meeting so that the Commission make a decision on that date. Commission Member Speaker recommended a two year tier, equal amount percentage. Commission Member Alley confirmed that with Council 20% would be justified as 1% each year since the last year, with at 5% onetime increase, and even with that amount it is only \$2,000.

The Commission consensus was to work on the justification for the increase, finalize the letter for discussion and possible approval at the March 5, 2015 meeting.

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 4:30p.m.

Respectively submitted by:

Sherrie Boak, City Council Office Manager

Approved by Committee on March 5, 2015